

**Submission
No 35**

**INQUIRY INTO UNSOLVED MURDERS AND LONG-TERM
MISSING PERSONS CASES IN NEW SOUTH WALES
BETWEEN 1965 AND 2010**

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Through my role in the NSW Rural Fire Service, I have participated in two search-and-rescue operations for missing persons. One of those searches reached a conclusion; the other individual remains missing. Both operations involved teams moving through extremely dense bushland, working methodically to ensure that no section of our allocated search area was left unchecked.

In the most recent search, we used geolocation and live-tracking through a system known as Fire mapper. This allowed authorised personnel to see, in real time, exactly which areas had been covered and where gaps remained. The technology significantly improved coordination and reduced the risk of duplicated effort.

However, these searches are highly labour-intensive, and the number of days they can be sustained is limited by available personnel, terrain, and operational priorities. It occurred to me during the most recent operation that a similar mapping and tracking system, if made safely accessible to the public, could expand search capacity in a controlled and accountable way.

With the permission of the landowner, police could designate specific areas on the mapping platform that require further searching. Volunteer bushwalkers, outdoor groups, or members of the public could then choose to walk through unsearched areas at their own convenience, with their GPS tracks automatically updating the map. This would allow low-risk terrain to be progressively searched over a longer period, without diverting emergency service resources from other duties.

Such a system would not replace formal search operations, nor would it be appropriate for high-risk or sensitive areas. But for suitable environments, it could provide a structured, technology-enabled way for the community to contribute meaningfully to missing-persons searches long after official operations have scaled down.

This approach could increase coverage, reduce the likelihood of missed areas, and give families confidence that every reasonable effort has been made.